

THE CHURCHES AND TO-DAY'S SERVICES

How to Put the Bible Into Life

Sermon by
REV. FLOYD W. TOMKINS,

Text: Psalm 119: 105-112.

This 119th psalm is a wonderful psalm, and full of devotion. It is really a long and direct prayer to God, and as such is an example of a true approach to Him with whom we are privileged to commune. The titles at the head of each section of the eight verses are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. "Aleph" corresponds to our "A"; "Beth" corresponds to our "B," etc. The Bible in some form or other is referred to in nearly every one of the 176 verses; therefore, it is a great Bible psalm. The passage chosen for meditation to-day opens with that wonderful declaration: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my Path." The word translated "lamp" signifies in the original Hebrew a candle. In one of the Indian museums there is a petrified shaman or sandal dug up in some exploration of the Holy Land. In the toe of the slipper there is a little socket evidently intended to hold a candle. In olden times the streets were dark, and doubtless it was the custom to carry a candelabrum, or something corresponding to it, at the toe of the shoe to light the way. Hence the significance of the verse.

Indeed, we don't remember that we ever fully understand the Bible as we find Christ, the Son of God, and His work for us human beings, mirrored everywhere. He is the Key to unlock the mysteries of the Bible. He is the Divine Person hidden in the History and Prophecy and Psalms. His is the voice sounding like a deep undertone all through the wonderful account of man's struggle upward. He is the central figure towering above all things and all men, and all things in life and in the world point to Him and worship Him.

May God help us thus to make the Bible our daily companion, not merely by reading it, but by bringing it into touch with our living and our serving. Then indeed will it be a light to shine upon the way which leads us to heaven.

"Many are the heavenly pages before me, many are the bright days before me, And still new beauty may I see, And still increasing light."

SERMONS IN PARAGRAPHS, LINES AND SENTENCES

One of the sweetest messages that Jesus spoke when He was here on the earth was, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth." It is never mistaken in the judgment and estimates concerning our labors for His Kingdom. Ministers judge by results, but our Heavenly Father judges by our efforts. In His faithful judgment failure does not always mean fault. He knows how much our labors and sacrifices mean, and He weighs them where men would only measure them. There is infinite comfort in each of these loving words, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth"—Christian observe.

We may think of three special ways in which to put the Bible into our daily life. The first is an application of its words to our own individual experiences. There is a message from nearly every verse in the Bible for you, friend, and mine. We will only seek it out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Take, for instance, the first verse of the fourteenth chapter of St. John: "Let not your heart be troubled." There is a message directly to my life telling me not to worry, or take the first verse of the One Hundred and Twenty-first Psalm: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." There I have a message that I must look up, not down, look forward, not backward, look out, not in. We cannot understand the richness and blessed helpfulness of God's word, unless we turn it to our own needs and our own experiences. Another way of popular design in studying the character of the Bible and the history of God's people, especially the problem of the lost, when we find how they touch directly in the life we are living. Take the Parable of the Sower. How we feel at once that we are sowing seed, and do not know what the harvest will be. If the seed is good and it falls upon a heart which has been prepared, then the harvest will be rich; if the seed is poor, that is, if we are not genuine and sincere in our words and works, then the harvest will be a failure, or worse still, it may be a harvest of sin and misery. That is why the parable around and going myself, the parable around the seed sown by the Holy Spirit tells if I am honest or if I am wrapped up in the pleasures of this world, or if I grow weary in trying to do right, then alas, the harvest is not what I wished it to be. By this illustration we see how the Bible is meant to come right down into the arena of our daily conflicts. Happy is he who studies it and learns how it brings him a message directly from God.

WORLD BIBLE IS PARABLE CONCERNING HUMAN LIFE

The second message is that we are all a parable concerning human life. From Genesis to Revelation, as it pictures the experiences of the human race, so it pictures your life and mine from the cradle to the grave. First, there is our creation. Then, alas, there is the weakness which calls for God's help. Then there is the struggle upward, in which we wander in a wilderness where we often hunger and thirst. Then there is the visitation of the Master Who finds us and tells us He has come to redeem us; and then we enter into the life of the Spirit, and being quickened, we are born, let us say, of the Spirit of God. Then we find our service for others, called for, and then at last we come to the great day when the dear Lord calls us to Himself. The Bible thus becomes almost a history of my own life, and in the struggles of its people I find an inspiration, and in their failures I find a warning. In the loving care of Christ in the Gospels I find comfort. In His declaration of pardon I find assurance, and in the pictures of heaven I have the light of a glorious anticipation. I think this is why we love the Bible so and treasure the volume as we read it day to day.

ALL PARTS OF SCRIPTURES POINT TO THE CHRIST

"Here in my life," I say, as I look at the Book and feel that it pictures my whole human experience from birth to death. And thus daily, I learn to work out, by God's help, in my life, that which God wishes and to strive in every way to bring my journey successfully to the end which God has appointed, doing on the way the work which God has given me to do. One can understand the emotion which led John Burton to write that beautiful old hymn:

"Holy Bible, Book Divine,
Precious Treasure, Thou art Mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came;
Mine to teach me what I am."
Finally, the Bible is put into life, when we find everywhere in it the dear Christ, the life, the truth, pointing to the end and end in the Old Testament references to the coming of the Messiah, and in the New Testament a vivid picture of His life and work. We are told by St. John that all things were made by the word, that is the Christ, and so when we read in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, we have Christ at the head of the list of humanity. Then when we read about Adam and Eve after the fall, when He said: "Thy seed shall bruise the serpent's head" we have the story of the Crucifixion told in advance, and when God clothed Adam and Eve with skins, evidently implying the shedding of some animal's blood that the skins

might be obtained, we have an anticipation of the shedding of His precious blood Who died on Calvary.

TYPES OF CHRIST FOUND IN OLD TESTAMENT

So all through the Bible we have types of Christ as Joseph, for instance who went down into Egypt as did our Lord in His infancy and Moses, who led the people out of slavery, as did the Christ Who is humanity's Great Emancipator.

Then we find in the Prophets' declarations concerning the Messiah's life—character and suffering. Everywhere the figure appears when once we look for Him with the devoted heart. Just as I look at the sun when it is shaded over and then look away, and so everywhere I see the sun, so when I look at Christ and love Him with my whole heart, I see Him and hear His message to me.

Indeed, we don't remember that we ever fully understand the Bible as we find Christ, the Son of God, and His work for us human beings, mirrored everywhere. He is the Key to unlock the mysteries of the Bible. He is the Divine Person hidden in the History and Prophecy and Psalms. His is the voice sounding like a deep undertone all through the wonderful account of man's struggle upward. He is the central figure towering above all things and all men, and all things in life and in the world point to Him and worship Him.

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Another way of popular design in studying the character of the Bible and the history of God's people, especially the problem of the lost, when we find how they touch directly in the life we are living. Take the Parable of the Sower. How we feel at once that we are sowing seed, and do not know what the harvest will be. If the seed is good and it falls upon a heart which has been prepared, then the harvest will be rich; if the seed is poor, that is, if we are not genuine and sincere in our words and works, then the harvest will be a failure, or worse still, it may be a harvest of sin and misery. That is why the parable around and going myself, the parable around the seed sown by the Holy Spirit tells if I am honest or if I am wrapped up in the pleasures of this world, or if I grow weary in trying to do right, then alas, the harvest is not what I wished it to be. By this illustration we see how the Bible is meant to come right down into the arena of our daily conflicts. Happy is he who studies it and learns how it brings him a message directly from God.

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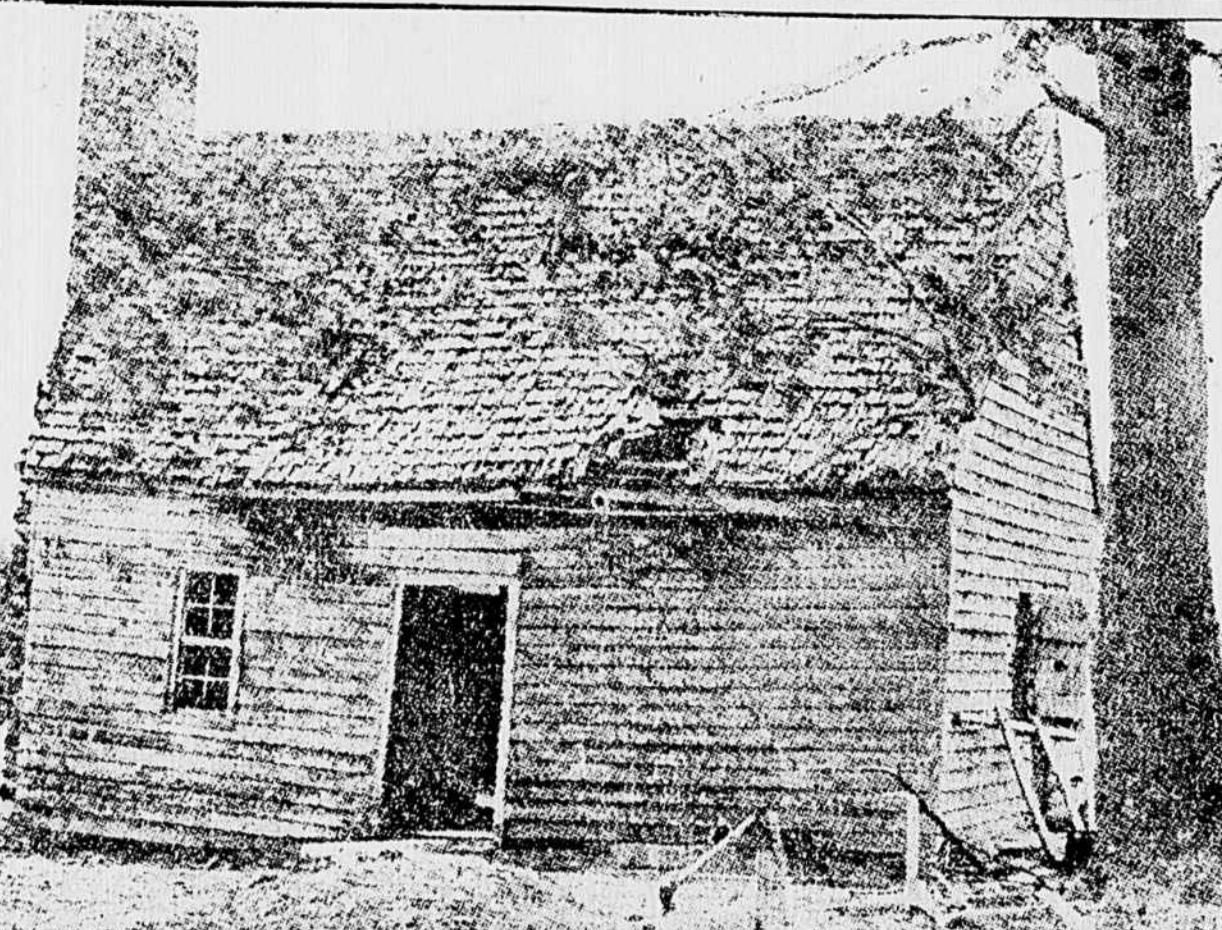
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Where Apostle of American Methodism Breathed His Last



The above picture shows the Arnold home, in Spotsylvania County, Va., where Bishop Asbury died, March 31, 1816. This humble home will give some idea of the hardships and privations he suffered. In his journal, the Bishop speaks of sleeping on the floor of a cabin on a deer skin.

METHODISTS TO HONOR BISHOP ASBURY'S MEMORY

One Hundredth Anniversary of Death of "American Wesley" Occurs March 31.

HAD MOST UNIQUE CAREER

Died in Spotsylvania County, Va., After Having Traveled 270,000 Miles, Mostly on Horseback, and Crossed Mountains.

On March 31 the 100,000 Methodists in America will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the death of Bishop Francis Asbury, who died on that date in Spotsylvania county a century ago